

(2-4) 320-02-1991 V5-3
Buff-breasted Sandpiper ~~187~~

Seen from Sept. 6, 1991 ~~at least to Sept. 10, 1991~~
to Sept. 19, 1991

by Jonathan Heller

On September 6, I discovered two adult Buff-breasted Sandpipers on a sod farm southwest of Landisville along Stony Battery Road near its intersection with Nolt Road. On Sunday Jerry Book and several others discovered a third, juvenile bird. Over the next five days many birders were able to study all three at length. They were usually quite cooperative and approachable, allowing me to get within 100 feet. They were photographed by Randy Miller and Eric Witmer.

My first observation of the birds was of them flying. I noticed that they were substantially smaller than Killdeer, which were also present; but what stood out was that they were unmarked above. The underparts were a rich buffy color, especially the face, throat, and breast. The bill was short and rather thin and the neck longer and thinner than in most shorebirds. The underwing was white except for a dark trailing edge and a dark crescent on the shoulder. The eye stood out on the buffy face. The back was clearly patterned with shades of brown, and the back of the juvenile bird appeared rather scaly. While on the ground, the birds would occasionally raise their wings straight up at a ninety degree angle. When walking, the birds would pump their heads back and forth sort of like a Rock Dove. The legs were bright yellow. The birds gave a call that sounded something like *br-r-r-eet*.

There was no trouble with identifying these birds as Buff-breasted Sandpipers. No other shorebird of that size has such extensive buffy coloring below. Upland Sandpiper and golden-plover are much larger with a different underwing pattern. Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers are not nearly as buffy beneath, and they would usually show some white from above. The Pectoral Sandpiper is heavily streaked on the breast, and Baird's Sandpiper has black legs. A more similar species is the female Ruff, but I think it quite unlikely for one to show up at a sod farm. Even if that is possible, the

above points rule it out. The only previous Buff-breasted Sandpiper that I have seen was one near Bombay Hook, Delaware, in August of 1990.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Date of Sighting: 6 September 1991 to 10 September 1991

Observer(s): Jonathan Heller

Date of Submission: 1991

Submitted by: Jonathan Heller

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman			X				
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS			7				
DECISION			X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Bm Haas

Date:

3/7/92